

Genetic Services

Clinical genetics is a specialist regional service based at Birmingham Women's Hospital. Genetics clinics are held at a variety of locations throughout Coventry and Warwickshire. Patients who are referred to the service will be seen by a Consultant and/or a Genetics Counsellor.

Where can I find out more?

If you wish to know more about this or are concerned that there may be a genetic condition in your family speak to your GP. You may be referred to the local genetics service for further support and advice.

What happens next?

After a referral is received into the genetics service, a full family history will be obtained (with the help of an interpreter if needed). Only with a full family history can the service offer the best advice and information. When this is completed, an assessment of risk is then made, and the patient offered an appointment with a Genetic Counsellor or Consultant. If the risk is low a letter of reassurance will be sent.

Other resources

UK Genetics Alliance
www.geneticalliance.org.uk

Genetics Alliance UK is a national charity working to improve the lives of patients and families affected by all types of genetic conditions.

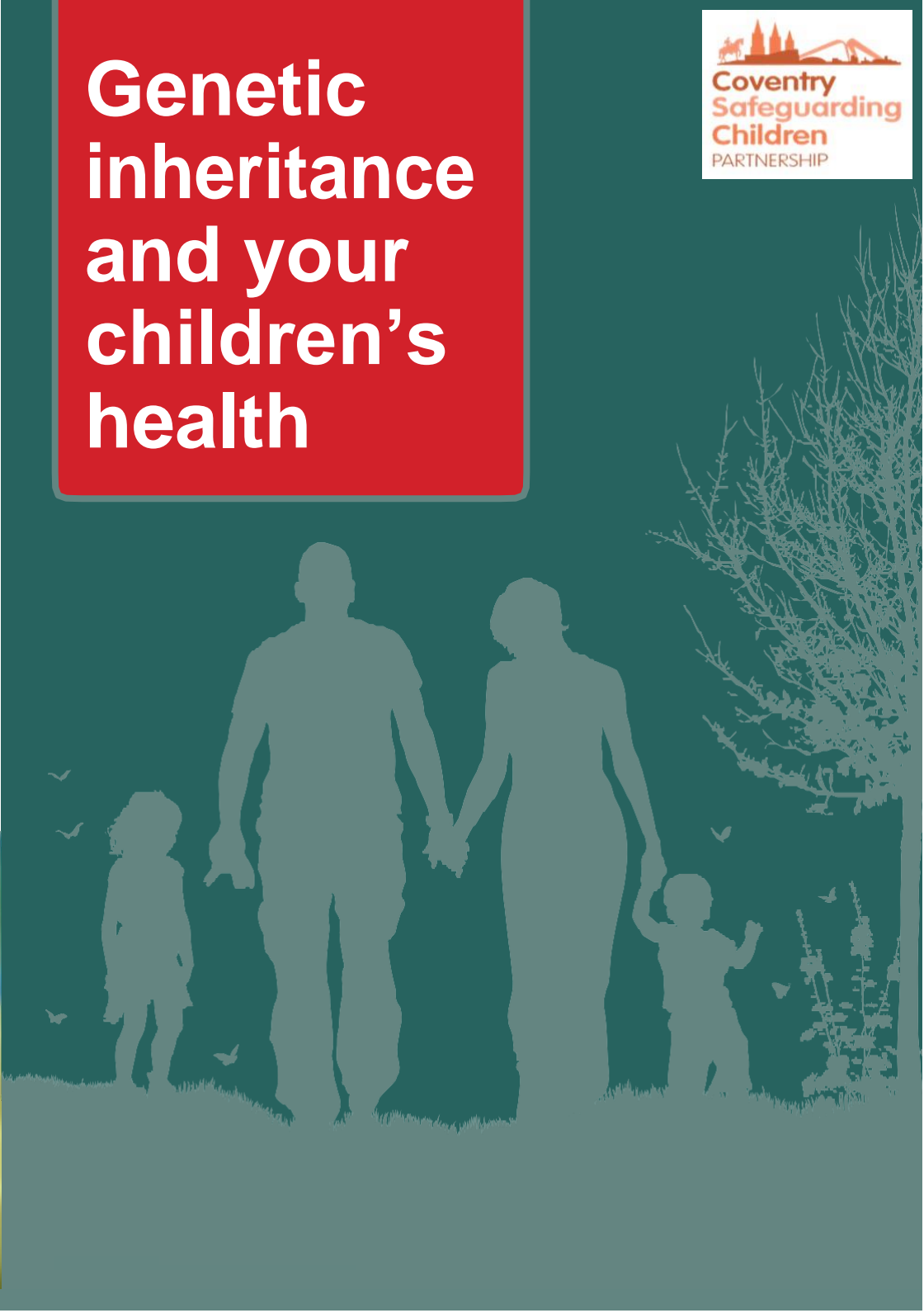
Contact a Family
www.contact.org.uk

Contact a Family - supports families of disabled children across the UK, whatever their condition or disability. They provide information, advice and support, bringing families together so they can support each other.

NHS Genetics
www.nhs.uk/conditions/genetics/

University Coventry and Warwickshire Genetic Service
www.uhcw.nhs.uk/our-services-and-people/our-departments/genetic-services/

Genetic inheritance and your children's health



Questions?

Q I hear a lot about this issue in particular communities, but which communities does it affect?

A Genetic disorders are found in every community. However in communities where marriages in the same family are common, the risk of a child born with a condition is around double the chance of that of non-blood related parents

Q I know married couples who are blood related and they have healthy children. Is it really true that this could mean they have a child with a disability?

A If a couple both carry an altered gene, although this will usually have no effect on them, they have a 25% chance of having a baby affected with a genetic condition. The chance of this happening is greater if the couple are related (or cousins).

Q I'm already married to my cousin so is there any point in learning more?

A At any stage information about genetics may be valuable to you and your family. Having all the information enables people to make the right choices for themselves.

What are genes?

We have two copies of each gene. One copy is inherited from our mother and one copy from our father. When we have children, we pass on only one copy of each of our genes.

Genes are the unique set of instructions in every cell which make each of use an individual. If a gene is altered, it can cause a genetic condition or disease. This gene alteration is known as a variant.



Genetics and your family

We all inherit many things from our parents; eye colour, hair colour even the size of our feet. We can also inherit some diseases and disabilities from our parents through altered genes. These are called genetic disorders. Families from all communities can be affected by genetic disorders; however, some genetic conditions are more common among families where couples are cousins. These conditions are known as recessive disorders due to the way they are inherited.



 WORKING GENE  ALTERED GENE

Recessive inheritance

The diagram below explains recessive inheritance. Both parents are known as healthy carriers. They pass on one copy of each gene. This can be the working copy or the altered copy. This means they do not have a disorder themselves. With each pregnancy they pass one gene each to the baby; this can

either be the working gene or the altered gene. There are four possible outcomes with each pregnancy as described in the diagram.

Research tells us that for every 100 babies born to unrelated couples fewer than 3 have a birth disorder. Where parents are closely related 5 to 6 out of every 100 babies have a disorder.

